

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Please amend Claims 1, 4 and 5 and cancel Claim 3 as indicated in the following listing of claims, which replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) An unwinding system for handling reels of tissue comprising:

for each ply of laminar tissue to be applied a pair of reels, of which one supplies a laminar web to be applied, whilst the other is placed on stand-by to be spliced onto an infeed line when the supply reel is spent, wherein:

the pair of reels are mounted in respective reel-carrier assemblies which are capable of vertical displacement, with one reel being located on an upper part and the other on a lower part at a distance between them that enables the reel in stand-by to be prepared whilst the other reel is in an operating mode;

each reel is mounted between respective holding cones that control unwinding rotation, with said cones also being capable of being moved closer together or further apart for loading and unloading of the corresponding reel; **and**

a reel-carrier from which one of the reels is removed is displaced vertically until it occupies the upper part, whilst a reel-carrier that holds a fresh reel that is coming into operation drops to a lower position, freeing the upper part for incorporation of a new reel in the reel-carrier that has become unoccupied; and

a splicing mechanism for automatic splicing of the laminar web on the reel-in stand-by with the web on the reel in operation when the latter is spent, with said mechanism comprising a fixed bar, a moving bar operated by pneumatic cylinders that is capable of being displaced towards the fixed bar and another moving bar operated by a chain and pinion system that is capable of displacement between a position of operation and a position of insertion between the fixed bar and the moving bar to be grasped between them, with said other moving

bar incorporating a clamp such that a leading edge of the laminar web that is in the stand-by position may be taken up.

2. (Previously Presented) An unwinding system for handling reels of tissue as recited in claim 1, wherein for application of two laminar plies of tissue two symmetrical unwinding units are arranged, each unwinding unit comprising respective reel-carrier assemblies capable of being displaced vertically and fitted with cones for holding the corresponding reels.

3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended) An unwinding system for handling reels of tissue as recited in claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein the splicing mechanism comprises an automatic cutting system which is fitted with a blade capable of displacement by pneumatic action to a position resting on web of the reel in operation, in conjunction with a change in direction of rotation of said reel in operation that causes a tug on the web, which thus effectively leads to a cutting of said web subsequent to a splicing of fresh web which is to continue the supply; with the blade (46) being envisaged in the shape of a comb, to facilitate the incision on the web to be cut.

5. (Currently Amended) An unwinding system for handling reels of tissue ~~as recited in claim 1 further~~ comprising:

for each ply of laminar tissue to be applied a pair of reels, of which one supplies a laminar web to be applied, whilst the other is placed on stand-by to be spliced onto an infeed line when the supply reel is spent, wherein:

the pair of reels are mounted in respective reel-carrier assemblies which are capable of vertical displacement, with one reel being located on an upper part and the other on a lower part at a distance between them that enables the reel in stand-by to be prepared whilst the other reel is in an operating mode;

each reel is mounted between respective holding cones that control unwinding rotation, with said cones also being capable of being moved closer together or further apart for loading and unloading of the corresponding reel;

a reel-carrier from which one of the reels is removed is displaced vertically until it occupies the upper part, whilst a reel-carrier that holds a fresh reel that is coming into operation drops to a lower position, freeing the upper part for incorporation of a new reel in the reel-carrier that has become unoccupied; and

an outlet having a mechanism comprising two fixed rollers and a moving roller capable of vertical displacement and controlled by a synchronization device, with said mechanism comprising a rocker arm unit for tension in a supply line and a magazine for passage of corresponding web for continuity of the supply during splicing.

6. (Previously Presented) An unwinding system for handling reels of tissue as recited in claim 1, wherein inserted into each reel to be mounted on the unwinding device there are bushings that are fitted into ends of a mandrel of each corresponding reel, with said bushings featuring lateral windows, to act as sockets for expansion keys on the cones for holding the reel in the assembly, which are inserted into said bushings, establishing a rotary connection for operation of the corresponding reel by means of said insertion of the keys into the windows on the aforementioned bushings.

7. (Previously Presented) An unwinding system for handling reels of tissue as recited in claim 6, wherein the bushings comprise a groove that remains on an outside of the reel to be incorporated, for its attachment with said groove onto devices for lifting the reel into position on the assembly, the groove having positioning contours to adapt to the lifting device so that the bushings are positioned to ensure that the keys on the holding cones fit into the windows.

8. (Previously Presented) An unwinding system for handling reels of tissue as recited in claim 1, wherein below each reel-carrier assembly a retractable ramp is provided, with

Appl. No. 10/627,401  
Amdt. dated May 9, 2005  
Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 Expedited Procedure  
Examining Group 3654

PATENT

a stop also retractable and in front of it, which comprises a receiving area for unloading by freefall of mandrels of the spent reels, to situate said mandrels on a conveyor belt for their removal.